

The Maine Farmer: An Agricultural and Family Newspaper.

Maine Farmer.

Augusta, Dec. 21, 1878.

TERMS OF THE MAINE FARMER.
125 AND 250 CENTS OR \$1.00 NOT PAID WITHIN
THREE MONTHS OR DAY OF SUBSCRIPTION
Postage Free to Subscribers.

Any subscriber desiring to change his postage direction or to discontinue his paper, must notify us to the name of the office which has been recently sent, otherwise we shall be unable to comply with your request.

All payments made by subscribers will be reduced on the yester days attached to their papers the printed date in connection with the subscriber's name will show the time to which he has paid, and will constitute, in all cases, a valid receipt for money remitted by him.

Notice to Delinquent Subscribers.

We are now making up the accounts of subscribers to the *MAINE FARMER*, who are indebted for the paper from the year 1875 to the present time, to be placed in the hands of an attorney for collection. Opportunity will be given to all who are in arrears to make payment to our agents or to us, or to us, at our advertised rates on or before Oct. 1, 1878. If delayed beyond that date, collection will be made by legal means.

Owing to the exigencies of the times we have extended the time of delinquent subscribers to May 1st, 1879. And after that date we shall discontinue those subscribers that have not settled, and put their accounts into the hands of our Attorney for collection.

Collectors' Notices.

Mr. J. P. CLARK will call upon our subscribers in East Somerset and Piscataquis Counties during December.

John W. KELLOGG of Sherman Mills, will call upon our subscribers in Aroostook County during December.

Mr. G. S. AYER, Agent for the FARMER, will call upon our subscribers in Sagadahoc County during December.

Expert Testimony.

The more the master is considered, and the greater the opportunities of carefully examining what is generally termed expert testimony as given in our courts of justice, and before legal and scientific bodies, the closer one comes to the conclusion that such testimony, as usually presented, is of very little worth and of very slight influence. Go over the whole range of all the testimony given by so called "experts" on the multitude of cases in which such testimony is being called into service, and what is the sum of it? That nobody knows! One expert tells you that the bridge was safe, perfectly safe, another says it was defective and insecure. One insists that lead is poison as a conveyer of water used for domestic purposes, and that a tin lined pipe is the only safe one known; while the next time, expert testimony comes in with the statement that tin is poisonous and that some substances used as food are so largely adulterated with it that we are all liable to have our stomachs perforated with holes, or lined with a tin coating if such food is consumed. One witness says the man is insane; another that he is not. One expert declares that nutrition has been interfered with; another that it has not, as there has been simply a wasting of the muscles. One says there is paralysis; another says there is only organic lesion of the brain or spinal cord. And after all the evidence has been put in, what we have is a sort of indistinct jumble, a mass of contradictory testimony which is worth little in the sum total, because it has slight weight, and can be accepted only with certain drawbacks.

In our courts of justice the expert testimony which we see most of, has to do with medico-legal questions, and it is often such as to unsettle one's confidence in the skill and character of those who go upon the stand. At the S. C. court, Kennebec county, a physician located the scalops in the loin, or lumbar region of the system, and yet that physician is to-day engaged in the practice of his profession! What school boy does not know the make-up of the human organism better than that? In legal practice questions are constantly arising in regard to insanity, infanticide, compensation for injury, life insurance and the like. In the settlement of which opinions of scientific experts are needed, but which must be presented and sifted by legal methods—the results of which are frequently very unsatisfactory to some, possibly to all the parties interested. But it is to presume that in many cases a failure to agree between medical experts under oath in the witness stand, may be due, not to a want of honest purpose, but to a want of thorough knowledge of the particular subject in dispute. Such being the case, only the most skilled and learned should be consulted upon the questions involved, and no opinion should be given unless based upon a sufficient state of facts.

But there is another class of subjects upon which expert testimony is sought and given, in which the greater public is more interested, and the results of which have a wider application than those brought for adjudication into our courts. These are those which affect public health, which relate to abstract questions of public policy, which concern the rights of individuals to royalties of inventions, which have to do with great principles and measures of government. It is here that the worthlessness of expert testimony is quite as conspicuous as anywhere in which we come in contact with it. In the public mind some one of these great questions are constantly up for agitation, and upon their solution experts concentrate the powerful rays of their consummate wisdom. With what result? That which meets us everywhere—who knows? Only a few years ago the papers were filled with statements calculated to give alarm to all who drank water from lead pipes, and testimonials from the highest scientific authorities were given in favor of tin as a conducting material for water. Why? An enterprising firm were engaged in pushing a new tin-lined water pipe, which proved a humbug. Next it was the immensely rich character of a Western lode, and some of the most distinguished scientists in the country had given letters to the company showing its high value—for what? Share or checks do you say? We only know the explosion of the Enna mine burst a good many persons, and injured the testimony of a good many experts. Again it is a mineral water, or a gold or copper mine. You pay the expert for his opinion, and you get just such an opinion as you want—but what is its value? Just now it is sugar and the polariscope—this industry from which Government draws an income of over \$37,000,000 annually, and in which individual refiners in one way and another make many fortunes every year. One interest says the polariscope should be the only sole test for the classification and assessment of duties on raw sugars; and an "expert" employed by an opposing interest says "the use of the polariscope will complicate the collection of duties on sugar, and open new facilities for fraud." A "sound" man's sight through a polariscope would be defective if a hundred dollars bill got into one end of the instrument!

The kind of conflicting testimony has been found in connection with the use of the microscope for the assessment of internal taxes and tariff on distilled spirits, and what is its value? We come back to our first starting point, and just here we must stop, so far as the author of this article is concerned. The author of this article is a partial, one-sided, or partisan master, and as such has value only as it is sustained by plain facts which may be seen and handled.

Guarantees were exchanged for gold in New York, Tuesday. This is the first time they have reached par. Specific payments were suspended in 1863.

PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS. The Senate of the United States, passed on Friday last, what is known as the Edmunds' bill. After the crisis of the last presidential election, men of all political opinions, saw the necessity of some provision for the future, that would prevent the recurrence of there being any uncertainty as to how a disputed election for the chief magistrate of the country should be settled. It was admitted on all sides and by representative men of each political party that there were uncertainties and grave defects in our system, and to avoid any conflict of authority, our last presidential election was referred to an Electoral Commission that was destined to give dissatisfaction to a large portion of the people, no matter what its decision might have been. In the delicate adjustment of power in this country it is most difficult to establish a method perfectly satisfactory to all interests, all parties and all states. The original constitution had a method, which was early found to be wrong, and was changed after the election of 1800, to the year under which all our presidents have been chosen except in the election of 1876. The provision of the Constitution as to who shall make the final count was disputed, hence the Electoral Commission. True, we have escaped some, but it must certainly be the desire of all citizens to have it settled by law that the mode of ascertaining and declaring the result of a presidential election shall be so plain that there can be neither dispute or uncertainty. We have held eighteen presidential elections under the twelfth amendment to our Constitution, but we have witnessed a state of facts, where the tide to this high office for the sake of peace, was conferred, by the action of a non partisan vote in both branches of Congress, in an extra Constitutional manner. The bill which passed the Senate last week was proposed by Senator Edmunds and endorsed by men of both parties, Senator Bayard of Delaware warmly approving it. The bill proposed some radical changes in elections. It provides that the electors of president and vice president shall be appointed in each State on the first Tuesday of October; that when ever the offices of president and vice president shall become vacant in any year more than two months next preceding the first Tuesday of October except that next preceding the end of the presidential term, a special election shall be held; that the electors shall meet on the second Monday in January after their appointment and any disputes that may arise regarding their appointment may be determined in such manner as each State shall prescribe for itself, and such determination shall be conclusive evidence of the title of the electors; that the election shall be in service, and that the electors shall meet on the second Monday in January after their appointment and any disputes that may arise regarding their appointment may be determined in such manner as each State shall prescribe for itself, and such determination shall be conclusive evidence of the title of the electors; 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